

Serial No. 10/687,182

In the Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (currently amended) A fence system comprising:

at least two spaced tubular vertical support members, each of said vertical support members having side walls and at least two vertically spaced holes in at least one side wall thereof;

rail connectors configured to be received and retained in each of said holes in said vertical support members, each of said connectors including:

a receiver end, said receiver end having shoulders that contact an outer surface of said side wall of said vertical ~~supports~~ support members and extends outwardly from said side wall of said support members when said connector is assembled therewith,

~~at least one~~ an opposing pair of retention clips extending from a rear surface of said receiver end, said opposing pair of retention clips configured to extend into said hole in said sidewall of said vertical support member and cooperate to engage said sidewall to retain said rail connector in said assembled relation, and

~~at least one~~ an opposing pair of guide pins extending from a rear surface of said receiver end, said opposing pair of guide pins contacting ~~at least one side~~ opposite sides of said hole, said opposing pair of guide pins configured and arranged to prevent said rail connector from rotating relative to said vertical support member; and

at least two horizontal rails, each of said rails having a first end and a second end, each of said ends of said rails having openings therein, said openings configured to be frictionally received and retained by said receiver end of said rail connectors,

wherein said at least two horizontal rails are supported in parallel spaced relation between said at least two vertical support members.

2. (original) The fence system of claim 1, further comprising:

a linear groove extending between said first and second ends of each of said horizontal rails; and

Serial No. 10/687,182

a fence panel having a top and bottom edge, said fence panel extending between and supported by said spaced horizontal rails, wherein said top and bottom edges are received and retained in said grooves in said horizontal rails.

3. (original) The fence system of claim 2, wherein said fence panel is a material selected from the group consisting of: woven polymer fabric, interwoven polymer strapping and knitted polymer fabric.

4. (original) The fence system of claim 2, wherein said top and bottom edges of said fence panel include pockets extending along the length thereof, wherein a retention member is inserted into said pockets to prevent said edge of said panel from being removed from said grooves in said horizontal rails.

5. (original) The fence system of claim 2, wherein said top and bottom edges of said fence panel include a plurality of spaced tabs extending outwardly therefrom into said grooves in said horizontal rails, said tabs including pockets, wherein a tubular member is inserted into said pockets to prevent said tabs from being removed from said grooves in said horizontal rails.

6. (previously presented) The fence system of claim 1, further comprising:  
three vertically spaced holes in at least one side wall of each of said vertical supports; and

three horizontal rails, each of said rails having a first end and a second end, each of said ends of said rails having openings therein, said openings configured to be frictionally received and retained by said receiver end of said rail connectors,

wherein said at three horizontal rails are supported in parallel spaced relation one of said rails in a top position, one of said rails in a middle position and one of said rails in a bottom position between said at least two vertical support members.

7. (original) The fence system of claim 6, further comprising:  
a linear groove extending between said first and second ends of each of said top and bottom horizontal rails;

Serial No. 10/687,182

two linear grooves between said first and second ends of said middle rail;

a first fence panel having a top and bottom edge, said first fence panel extending between and supported by said top and middle spaced horizontal rails, wherein said top and bottom edges are received and retained in said grooves in said top and middle horizontal rails; and

a second fence panel having a top and bottom edge, said second fence panel extending between and supported by said middle and bottom spaced horizontal rails, wherein said top and bottom edges are received and retained in said grooves in said middle and bottom horizontal rails

8. (original) The fence system of claim 1, wherein said holes in said side wall of said vertical supports are rectangular shaped.

9. (canceled)

10. (previously presented) The fence system of claim 1, said rail connector further comprising:

a locking detent extending from a side of said receiver portion, said detent configured and arranged to engage a retention hole in the side of said horizontal rail when said end of said rail is in assembled relation with said rail connector.

11. (original) The fence system of claim 1, wherein said vertical supports, said rail connectors and said horizontal rails are metallic.

12. (original) The fence system of claim 1, wherein said vertical supports and said horizontal rails are formed from a material selected from the group consisting of extruded vinyl and PVC.

13. (original) The fence system of claim 1, wherein said rail connector is formed from a polymer material selected from the group consisting of ABS, PVC, HDPE and polycarbonate.

Serial No. 10/687,182

14. (currently amended) A connector for attaching vertical and horizontal members of a fencing system, said connector comprising:

a receiver portion, said receiver portion configured and arranged to frictionally retain a horizontal fence support rail, said receiver portion including shoulders that contact an outer surface of a vertical member when in assembled relation therewith;

~~at least one~~ an opposing pair of retention clips extending from a rear surface of said receiver end, said opposing pair of retention clips configured to extend into said hole in said sidewall of said vertical support member and cooperate to engage said sidewall to retain said rail connector in said assembled relation; and

~~at least one~~ an opposing pair of guide pins extending from a rear surface of said receiver end, said opposing pair of guide pins contacting ~~at least one side~~ opposite sides of said hole, said opposing pair of guide pins configured and arranged to prevent said rail connector from rotating relative to said vertical support member.

15. (canceled)

16. (original) The connector of claim 14, wherein said connector is metallic.

17. (original) The connector of claim 14, wherein said connector is formed from a polymer material selected from the group consisting of ABS, PVC, HDPE and polycarbonate.

18. (currently amended) The fence system of claim 1, wherein said opposing pair of guide pins also serves as a retention clips configured to extend into said hole in said sidewall of said vertical support member and engage said sidewall to retain said rail connector in said assembled relation.

19. (currently amended) The connector of claim 14, wherein said opposing pair of guide pins also serves as a retention clips configured to extend into said hole in said sidewall of said vertical support member and engage said sidewall to retain said rail connector in said assembled relation